

ONLINE TOOL HELPS LANDOWNERS ESTIMATE FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF CONSERVATION

Tennessee producers who want to work with the US Department of Agriculture now have an online tool to help them estimate some of the payments they would receive for putting their land into conservation buffers. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that offers financial incentives to landowners to protect highly erodible and environmentally sensitive land by establishing conservation buffers with the planting of trees, grass, and other long-term cover. Conservation buffers, such as the Riparian Forest Buffer are one of the most environmentally beneficial conservation practices a producer can install.

CRP buffers are offered under a continuous sign up (no waiting to determine eligibility if certain basic requirements are met). The Riparian Forest Buffer is an excellent opportunity for livestock producers to get a clean water source while helping the environment by keeping cattle and other animals out of creeks and streams. CRP also assists farmers with paying for fencing, creek crossings, and returning foliage and wildlife cover to streambanks.

To assist landowners with financial benefits of the CRP buffer, visit CRP's online Riparian Forest Buffer Payment Estimator <<http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/CRP.html>> (The payment estimator is located at the bottom of the page when you follow the link.)

The online payment estimator tool is very beneficial to USDA employees as well as landowners. The calculator allows landowners to get a quick payment estimate for the amount of cost share dollars they could receive for CRP practices such as implementing water facilities, pipelines, exclusion fences, and stream crossings. In some cases the CRP cost share for installing these watering facilities is much more than the rental payment. If a producer can get essentially 90% cost share for installing fencing, stream crossings and/or water development, most will be willing to install a Riparian Forest Buffer.

For more information about the Conservation Reserve Program, contact your nearest USDA Service Center listed in the blue pages of your phone directory. Or visit the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) website at <http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov/> and look for CRP under Programs or the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> and look for CRP under Conservation Programs. CRP is administered by the FSA with the NRCS providing technical assistance.

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Helping People Help the Land